

CHAPTER 121**(SB 103)**

AN ACT relating to registered nurse first assistants.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

Section 1. KRS 342.035 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) Periodically, the executive director shall promulgate administrative regulations to adopt a schedule of fees for the purpose of ensuring that all fees, charges, and reimbursements under KRS 342.020 and this section shall be fair, current, and reasonable and shall be limited to such charges as are fair, current, and reasonable for similar treatment of injured persons in the same community for like services, where treatment is paid for by general health insurers. In determining what fees are reasonable, the executive director may also consider the increased security of payment afforded by this chapter. On or before November 1, 1994, and on July 1 every two (2) years thereafter, the schedule of fees contained in administrative regulations promulgated pursuant to this section shall be reviewed and updated, if appropriate. Within ten (10) days of April 4, 1994, the executive director shall execute a contract with an appropriately qualified consultant pursuant to which each of the following elements within the workers' compensation system are evaluated; the methods of health care delivery; quality assurance and utilization mechanisms; type, frequency, and intensity of services; risk management programs; and the schedule of fees contained in administrative regulation. The consultant shall present recommendations based on its review to the executive director not later than sixty (60) days following execution of the contract. The executive director shall consider these recommendations and, not later than thirty (30) days after their receipt, promulgate a regulation which shall be effective on an emergency basis, to effect a twenty-five percent (25%) reduction in the total medical costs within the program.
- (2) No provider of medical services or treatment required by this chapter, its agent, servant, employee, assignee, employer, or independent contractor acting on behalf of any medical provider, shall knowingly collect, attempt to collect, coerce, or attempt to coerce, directly or indirectly, the payment of any charge, for services covered by a workers' compensation insurance plan for the treatment of a work-related injury or occupational disease, in excess of that provided by a schedule of fees, or cause the credit of any employee to be impaired by reason of the employee's failure or refusal to pay the excess charge. In addition to the penalty imposed in KRS 342.990 for violations of this subsection, any individual who sustains damages by any act in violation of the provisions of this subsection shall have a civil cause of action in Circuit Court to enjoin further violations and to recover the actual damages sustained by the individual, together with the costs of the lawsuit, including a reasonable attorney's fee.
- (3) Where these requirements are furnished by a public hospital or other institution, payment thereof shall be made to the proper authorities conducting it. No compensation shall be payable for the death or disability of an employee if his death is caused, or if and insofar as his disability is aggravated, caused, or continued, by an unreasonable failure to submit to or follow any competent surgical treatment or medical aid or advice.
- (4) The executive director shall, by December 1, 1994, promulgate administrative regulations to adopt a schedule of fees for the purpose of regulating charges by medical providers and other health care professionals for testimony presented and medical reports furnished in the litigation of a claim by an injured employee against the employer. The workers' compensation medical fee schedule for physicians, 803 KAR 25:089, having an effective date of February 9, 1995, shall remain in effect until July 1, 1996, or until the effective date of any amendments promulgated by the executive director, whichever occurs first, it being determined that this administrative regulation is within the statutory grant of authority, meets legislative intent, and is not in conflict with the provisions of this chapter. The medical fee schedule and amendments shall be fair, current, and reasonable and otherwise comply with this section.
- (5)
 - (a) To ensure compliance with subsections (1) and (4) of this section, the executive director shall promulgate administrative regulations by December 31, 1994, which require each insurance carrier, self-insured group, and self-insured employer to certify to the executive director the program or plan it has adopted to ensure compliance.
 - (b) In addition, the executive director shall periodically have an independent audit conducted by a qualified independent person, firm, company, or other entity hired by the executive director, in accordance with the personal service contract provisions contained in KRS 45A.690 to 45A.725, to ensure that the requirements of subsection (1) of this section are being met. The independent person, firm, company, or other entity selected by the executive director to conduct the audit shall protect the confidentiality of any

information it receives during the audit, shall divulge information received during the audit only to the executive director, and shall use the information for no other purpose than the audit required by this paragraph.

- (c) The executive director shall promulgate administrative regulations governing medical provider utilization review activities conducted by an insurance carrier, self-insured group, or self-insured employer pursuant to this chapter.
 - (d) Periodically, or upon request, the executive director shall report to the Interim Joint Committee on Labor and Industry of the Legislative Research Commission or to the corresponding standing committees of the General Assembly, as appropriate, the degree of compliance or lack of compliance with the provisions of this section and make recommendations thereon.
 - (e) The cost of implementing and carrying out the requirements of this subsection shall be paid from funds collected pursuant to KRS 342.122.
- (6) The executive director may promulgate administrative regulations incorporating managed care or other concepts intended to reduce costs or to speed the delivery or payment of medical services to employees receiving medical and related benefits under this chapter.
- (7) For purposes of this chapter, any medical provider shall charge only its customary fee for photocopying requested documents. However, in no event shall a photocopying fee of a medical provider or photocopying service exceed fifty cents (\$0.50) per page. In addition, there shall be no charge for reviewing any records of a medical provider, during regular business hours, by any party who is authorized to review the records and who requests a review pursuant to this chapter.
- (8) (a) The executive director shall develop or adopt practice parameters or guidelines for clinical practice for use by medical providers under this chapter. The executive director may adopt any parameters for clinical practice as developed and updated by the federal Agency for Health Care Policy Research, or the executive director may adopt other parameters for clinical practice which are developed by qualified bodies, as determined by the executive director, with periodic updating based on data collected during the application of the parameters.
- (b) Any provider of medical services under this chapter who has followed the practice parameters or guidelines developed or adopted pursuant to this subsection shall be presumed to have met the appropriate legal standard of care in medical malpractice cases regardless of any unanticipated complication that may thereafter develop or be discovered.
- (9) (a) *Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the medical fee schedule adopted under subsection (4) of this section shall require all worker's compensation insurance carriers, worker's compensation self-insured groups, and worker's compensation self-insured employers to provide coverage and payment for surgical first assisting services to registered nurse first assistants as defined in KRS 216B.015.*
- (b) *The provisions of this subsection apply only if reimbursement for an assisting physician would be covered and a registered nurse first assistant who performed the services is used as a substitute for the assisting physician. The reimbursement shall be made directly to the registered nurse first assistant if the claim is submitted by a registered nurse first assistant who is not an employee of the hospital or the surgeon performing the service.*

Approved April 5, 2007.